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A man never gets so much good out of a book as when he possesses it.

~ Sir Arthur Hilps ~

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Numismatic Bibliomania Society
Officers

Vice President
David Sklow
1260 Smith Ct.
Rocky River, OH 44116
sdsklow@ameritech.net

President
Wayne Homren
1810 Antietam St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
whomren@coinlibrary.com

Secretary-Treasurer
Dave Hirt
5911 Quinn Orchard Rd.
Frederick, MD 21701

Members of the Board
Bob Metzger, P.O. Box 307, Lakeville, MN 55044-0307, ultrabob@gte.net
Larry Mitchell, Box 902317, Palmdale, CA 93590, numislit@yahoo.com
Bill Murray, 7400 Crestway, Apt. 1423, San Antonio, TX 78239, billmur13@aol.com
Joel Orosz, 4300 Old Field Trail, Kalamazoo, MI 49008, jjo@wkkf.org
Scott Rubin, P.O. Box 6885, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648, P.ScottRubin@worldnet.att.net
Tom Sheehan, P.O. Box 1477, Edmonds, WA 98020, twsheeh@ibm.net

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Publication Editor: Marilyn Reback
P.O. Box 1110
Monument, CO 80132
anaedi@money.org

Editor-in-Chief: Bob Metzger
P.O. Box 307
Lakeville, MN 55044-0307
ultrabob@gte.net

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President's Message — by Wayne Homren

It is an honor and a pleasure to serve as president of the Numismatic Bibliomania Society. I've been involved with NBS since the beginning, first as a member, then later as a Board member and most recently as vice president. It was a pleasure to serve with our immediate past president, Michael Sullivan, who led our group through a number of transitions, most notably the ratification of our new Constitution and Bylaws, and bringing Marilyn Reback on board as our new editor.

The new Board was installed at the recently concluded ANA convention near Chicago, where the attendees of our annual meeting were treated to interesting presentations by ANA Librarian Nawana Britenriker, ANS Executive Director Ute Wartenberg and bibliophile John Burns.

Shortly after the convention, Board members faced their first major hurdle, when they learned the company that prints *The Asylum* was getting out of the printing business. After some delay, a new printer was found (Stanton Publishing), and the results are in your hands. With this latest transition behind us, we can return to our regular printing schedule.

Throughout out these periods of change in our organization, we have continued to regularly publish the *E-Sylum*, our weekly E-mail newsletter, which now reaches well over 200 bibliophiles around the world. It is a handy way to keep in touch with our hobby and each other in the periods between *Asylum* printings and our annual and regional meetings. If you have access to an E-mail account and haven't already subscribed, I urge you to join us. Send your request to me at whomren@coinlibrary.com.

We have a number of new members in the organization, and I would like to close this message with a warm welcome to all of you—we're very glad to have you aboard and hope you enjoy your membership. It is a very interesting and rewarding hobby that we enjoy, and among the finer pleasures is sharing our interests with kindred spirits such as yourselves.

Welcome to the NBS!

New Members

Michael N. Bird, Riverside, CA
Allan Davisson, Cold Spring, MN
Rick Day, Oneonta, NY
Merrill F. Erskine, Warren, PA
Steve Hayden, Mauldin, SC
Lawrence J. Lee, Lincoln, NE
Karl Jay Leippe, Farmington, NY
W. Douglas Logan, Athens, AL
Leon Majors, Hebron, MD
Michael Marotta, Sidney, OH
C. Gregory McMurdo, Salem, OR
Karin Mearns, Puyallup, WA
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Charles Moore, Lexington, KY
Edward Olson, Mauston, WI
Michael J. Paradis, Nerbank, NY
—David Hirt, Secretary-Treasurer

Letters to the Editor

Erratum

In the article, "More on Budés De Asse ..." by William Malkmus—*The Asylum*, Vol. XVII, No. 2 (Summer 1999), pp. 18-21—two figure captions were transposed. The figures were numbered correctly in the order: Fig. 1, Fig. 3, Fig. 2 (1 and 3 fit on one page; 2 on another). However, please note that the captions for 2 and 3 were transposed.

Something About Coins

Upon arriving at the spring Pennsylvania Association of Numismatists show in Pittsburgh, I was alerted by Lancaster, Pennsylvania, numismatist John Eshbach to the availability of an early numismatic publication. I immediately went to the dealer's table and purchased the publication *Something About Coins* by E.I. Barra. Published in San Francisco in 1863, it certainly is the pioneer numismatic publication of the West Coast. Attinelli lists it on page 103 of his work.

Something About Coins is a 31-page pamphlet that starts with an explanation of the science of numismatics and gives information of coins through the ages, finishing with American coins. Massachusetts Oak and Pine Tree coins are discussed, along with Maryland and Connecticut money. The United States Mint is discussed, and branch mints are mentioned. Interestingly enough, a branch mint is listed as being in Auraria, Pike's Peak, Colorado Territory. It has been suggested that this was the Clark-Gruber operation or a U.S. Assay Office.

The local San Francisco Mint gets several pages, and its operations are described. It states that "Persons desirous of visiting the mint can do so any day the mint is in operation between the hours of 9 and 12 o'clock in the forenoon." Following this is a list of American and foreign coins in the author's collection.

Inside the front and rear covers are ads from Barra's Business at 118 First Street, San Francisco. Advertised is pure New England Rum at 37 1/2 cents per bottle. It is claimed that washing in it would give you a brilliant complexion and luxuriant, glossy hair. It does not mention what drinking it would do.

All in all, *Something About Coins* is quite an interesting early numismatic publication.

—David Hirt

Early Dealer Price Lists and Stationery

I collect early coin- and stamp-dealer price lists, as well as their covers (the envelopes in which they mailed their coins, stamps or price lists). I would enjoy hearing from others interested in this area, generally in earlier dealers and preferably pre-1900.

Fred L. Buza, P.O. Box 4485, Ocala, FL 34478-4485

This envelope was mailed by Chas. Stake of 24 Maple Street in Dayton, Ohio, to other dealer(s), S.H. & H. Chapman at their earliest business address, 2043 Tower St. in the Manayunk section of Philadelphia. Little is known of Stake, who was one of the first dealers outside the Boston—New York—Philadelphia area. He conducted a series of auction sales in the 1880s, but the catalogs almost never appear for sale.

The Printer's Devil — by Joel J. Orosz

Daniel Groux's "Descriptive Catalogue" for the Maryland Historical Society and the Coins of Joel Barlow

The first sale of the Harry W. Bass Jr. numismatic library, adroitly conducted by NBS co-founder George Frederick Kolbe on December 12, 1998, contained a treasure trove of biblionumismatic rarities. A pair of these, the wrappers of which are pictured in full color on pages 58 and 59 of the catalog, are all that remain of two grand designs launched by Daniel E. Groux, a promoter of outsized ambitions and pint-sized accomplishments, who touted himself as America's first and only "professor of numismatics."

Lot#146 offered the prospectus for a lottery to dispose of the "best collection of medals and coins in the United States." Lot#147 was a prospectus for a three-volume "numismatical history of the United States."

Groux was always better prospectively than retrospectively; the lottery fizzled and the numismatical history remained unwritten. There was, however, one significant project, little-remembered today, that Groux actually completed. Although not included with the prospectuses in the first Bass library sale, this obscure piece of ephemera reveals that Daniel#E. Groux had at least some numismatic substance under the many layers of bunkum he displayed to the outside world.

Part II of Emmanuel J. Attinelli's indispensable *Numismographics* chronologically documents "catalogues and price lists issued by institutions, dealers, or private individuals." Every item mentioned in the first eight pages, covering the years from 1764 to 1854, is a catalog of institutional holdings. The sole entry under the year 1851 is "Descriptive Catalogue of Coins, Greek and Roman Medals Belonging to the Historical Society of Maryland by D.E. Groux."

This "Descriptive Catalogue" is rarer than either of the prospectuses (which are rare indeed). NBS member Charles Davis, in his invaluable *American*

Numismatic Literature, lists no auction appearances for the Descriptive Catalogue from 1980-91 and a mere one apiece for each of the prospectuses.

The Descriptive Catalogue is a substantial octavo work, 41 pages long, describing a notable early American coin collection of 251 pieces, primarily comprising ancient and world coinage. Despite the focus on Greek and Roman medals in the title, the bulk of the collection consists of French coins and medals (108 pieces of the latter as compared to 38 of the former). The final page carries the following note: "Described and Arranged by D.E. Groux, Professor of Numismatics & C., Washington, D.C."

The self-styled professor did a creditable job of cataloging the coins. While the majority of the items are briefly described, some are annotated rather extensively. An example is item number 149, a medal of Gustavus Adolphus, king of Sweden, which merits a half-page description. Most of Groux's commentary is derived from observation of the pieces, but occasionally he interjects other data. For example, item 160, a medal of Clotaire I, king of France, asserts that the king was born in the year 500. Groux notes that this is uncertain and adds that Clotaire I succeeded his father on the throne.

Historians would quibble with part of this; Clotaire I was king of the Merovingian Franks, who united the three Frankish kingdoms of Austrasia, Neustria and Burgundy. However, since the Merovingians were lineal ancestors of the French, Groux had at least the right idea.

The collection contains a small but interesting assortment of American items, ranging from the commonplace to the caviar of the series:

52. Liberty Parent of Science and Industry, 1792 (Birch Cent).
53. 1851 Large Cent.
140. Washington Seasons Medal (The Farmer Medal).
141. Washington Seasons Medal (The Family Medal).
142. Jefferson Indian Peace Medal.
143. Horatio Gates Medal.
144. 1851 Silver Three-Cent Piece.
145. Massachusetts 1652 XII Pence.

In addition to the above list, items 81 and 82 add an intriguing, if perhaps spurious, wrinkle to the annals of American colonial coinage. Both are coins of Denmark, one dated 1740, struck, according to Groux, for a short-lived Danish colony in America. This "colony" is not mentioned in the standard histories of Pre-Revolutionary America, and one wonders by what authority the good professor made this claim.

Groux's facility with languages (he was fluent in French, German and English, and could read Greek and Latin) helped him immensely in compiling the catalog. While hardly, by modern

standards, a first-rate piece of numismatic scholarship, it still ranks as a workmanlike effort, and by 1851 standards was state of the art. It is no surprise that the Maryland Historical Society would call upon America's only "professor of numismatics" in nearby Washington to catalog its coin and medal collection. This begs the question: Where did they get it?

The answer is found within the pages of yet another of Attinelli's Part II entries under the year 1854: "Catalogue of the Manuscripts, Maps, Medals, Coins ... of the Maryland Historical Society," by Lewis Mayer. It should be noted that Lewis Mayer is not to be confused with William S. Frederick Mayers, an early member of the American Numismatic Society, and author of "The Literature of American Numismatics," the first article on that subject published in the United States (in *Norton's Literary Letter* number 3 for 1859).

Lewis Mayer was the Maryland Historical Society's assistant librarian, and he produced a work at once better organized and less satisfyingly described than Groux's 1851 effort. Mayer's work is more systematically cataloged than that of Groux, with additional external information brought to bear upon the artifacts. However, since it covers many more subjects than the numismatic collection, it reduces the cataloging of all pieces to an unsatisfying compendium description; for example, "Vols 17 and 18, 24 Silver Medals of Eminent Frenchmen, from 1617 to 1723." Mayer simply omits Groux's descriptions of individual coins.

Fortunately though, Mayer does record a number of important facts about the coins:

> This fine numismatic collection is comprised in 19 volumes, numbering in all 351 specimens, the larger portion being silver, in fine preservation. The Medals and Coins are firmly set in strong boards, so as to exhibit the obverse and reverse of each through the glasses which cover both sides of the case, and protect the specimens from touch or injury.

Interestingly, the method of display foreshadowed the system employed several decades later by M.L. Beistle and copied by Wayte Raymond in his "National" line of coin albums. Beistle and Raymond replaced the wood with cardboard and the glass with celluloid slides, but the principle was exactly the same (see David Lange's article in *The Asylum*, Summer 1994).

Mayer then reveals the provenance of the coins: "The collection was chiefly formed in Europe by Joel Barlow, minister to France, and author of our American epic, "The Columbiad." At his death, it passed to his brother-in-law, the late Col.

Bomford, U.S.A. [United States Army] upon whose decease General Towson, U.S.A. became its owner."

Joel Barlow (1754-1812) was a member of that remarkable generation of Americans who made a revolution, founded a nation, and still had time left over to be men of business and culture. According to James Woodress in *A Yankee's Odyssey: The Life of Joel Barlow*, young Joel's college buddy was Noah Webster of dictionary fame; a close friend later in life was Robert Fulton, who invented the steamboat. Barlow served as a chaplain in Washington's army and briefly practiced law after the peace of Paris.

As these two callings illustrate, Joel Barlow successfully combined God and Mammon as few ever have. He earned a fortune in the shipping business while living in Europe during the 1790s, and back in America in 1800, he championed Washington's idea of forming a national university in the nation's new capital, the District of Columbia. Although Barlow failed during his lifetime, his friends kept pressing the point and established Columbian College, which evolved into George Washington University.

Barlow gained his greatest fame as a poet, publishing in 1787 "The Vision of Columbus," an American epic poem in nine volumes. Barlow revised and republished this poem (by now a stupendous 3,675 couplets) 20 years later under the title Mayer mentioned, "The Columbiad." Barlow had a notable career as a diplomat, negotiating with the Dey of Algiers (before Jefferson finally sent the Navy to deal with the Barbary Pirates) and serving as American Minister to France from mid 1811 until his death at the end of 1812. President Madison was so convinced of the importance of the ambassador's mission, he ordered the frigate *Constitution* (better known as "Old Ironsides") to convey Barlow to France.

Returning to Mayer's account of the history of the coin collection, he recorded that

> General Towson immediately proceeded, with the assistance of Mr. D.E. Groux, of Washington, who is said to be a very competent Numismatist, to classify and arrange the entire collection, as well as to prepare an ample *catalogue raisonné* of the whole, which he caused to be printed and presented with the Coins and Medals to the Maryland Historical Society in March, 1852.

It is interesting that Mayer qualified his assessment of Groux: "who is said to be a very competent numismatist." It appears the assistant librarian was not completely impressed by Groux's scholarship. Nevertheless, he relied entirely on

Groux's work in the "Descriptive catalogue" to present his own condensed description of the collection. Mayer finished his annotation by mentioning the medal of Gustavus Adolphus "as an admirable specimen of minute and elegant art." But he concluded that for historical purposes, the series of medals depicting French sovereigns and illustrious men forms "the most valuable portion of the collection."

The French origin of the bulk of the collection is no coincidence, since Barlow considered France his second homeland and even maintained a residence in Paris. Mayer's statement that "The collection was chiefly formed in Europe, by Joel Barlow, Minister to France," implies that Barlow collected the coins in 1811-12, during his ambassadorship. This seems quite unlikely, for his diplomatic term in France was brief, the press of his duties was severe, and his death came suddenly and unexpectedly, while hastening to an audience with Napoleon during the emperor's disastrous 1812 retreat from Moscow.

It seems far more likely that Barlow gathered the coins during an earlier European sojourn, perhaps while he was resident there during the 1790s. And, as the presence of the large cent and trime of 1851 indicate, someone added a few pieces to the collection long after Barlow's demise.

The Barlow-Towson collection described by Groux does not contain paper money, and for good reason. According to NBS member Eric P. Newman's definitive *Early Paper Money of America*, the State of Rhode Island in Summer 1780 issued a total of £59,000 in legal-tender Lawful Money and legal-tender Bills of Credit, followed by another issue of £100,000 in legal-tender Bills of Credit in 1786. Barlow, then living in Hartford, joined with a small group of friends to attack this paper money policy. The friends sent to the papers, under the name "American Antiquities," several installments of a satirical poem assaulting, among other things, the paper money issues. The poem, in obvious homage to Alexander Pope's "Dunciad," was entitled "The Anarchiad." Referring to Rhode Island's paper money, it proclaimed that people with any sense would, "like Lot from Sodom, from Rhode Island run." The authors were at first called the "Wicked Wits," but over time the name "Connecticut Wits" has stuck.

If Barlow stepped on a few toes in Rhode Island, he trod upon many more on the international stage. One of those whose feet were thus flattened was, interestingly enough, another member of the small tribe of early American numismatists. In 1798 America and France were

lurching toward war. President John Adams had sent a new ambassador known to be hostile to the French revolutionary government, which refused to accept him. Adams sent a three-man commission to negotiate a way out of the impasse, but French Foreign Minister Talleyrand snubbed the three, instead sending an equal number of shadowy agents to treat with them.

These agents, known to history as "X, Y, and Z," demanded a large American loan for the French government, and a $240,000 bribe for Talleyrand. When this demand became public knowledge, Americans were infuriated. The slogan of the day, which would have many later numismatic echoes, was "Millions for Defense, Not One Cent for Tribute." Adams put the American Navy to sea and recalled George Washington from retirement to lead the Army, but he also worked courageously to prevent a complete breakdown in relations.

In the absence of an American ambassador to France, the ongoing negotiations to avoid war were led on the U.S. side by Adams' Minister to Holland, William Vans Murray. A Marylander and a staunch Federalist in politics, Murray was also a numismatist. On July 22, 1790, Murray sent young Robert Gilmor Jr. a package of ancient coins he had collected while studying law in London. In all probability, this gift was the precipitating event that launched Gilmor on a coin-collecting career that led him to nearly complete a collection of U.S. coinage by date, and to become, along with Matthew Stickney and Joseph Mickley, one of the "big three" numismatists in the United States during the first half of the 19th century.

Murray and Barlow locked horns over the latter's unofficial efforts at peacemaking. Although he held no diplomatic post in 1798, Barlow took it upon himself to head off war between the two countries he dearly loved. Murray considered this a traitorous act and said of Barlow and another American helping him, "they are mud on the lion's mane."

Despite the ill will, the combined effort of the two numismatists, coupled with Adams' principled leadership, bore fruit, and neither the French nor the Americans loosed the dogs of war. Not that Barlow was thanked for his efforts; in fact, Congress promptly passed a law prohibiting private citizens from negotiating with foreign governments on the nation's behalf.

Thirteen years after Barlow helped avert war with France, he was named ambassador to that nation and once again struggled to keep the United States at peace. Once more, he kept the

Americans and the French from crossing swords, but his efforts to prevent war with England were unsuccessful. Barlow died in 1812, disappointed that America was once again trading shots with its mother country.

Mayer was correct about the subsequent ownership of the late ambassador's collection of coins and medals. Barlow's wife, Ruth Baldwin Barlow, had a younger sister, Clara Baldwin Bomford. Her husband, Colonel George Bomford, was Chief of Ordnance of the United States Army. The Colonel and Clara purchased Kalorama, which had been the Washington, D.C., home of Joel and Ruth Barlow. Kalorama, which no longer exists, was located on a hill near Rock Creek, close to the intersection of 22nd and S Streets. Today, the Woodrow Wilson House Museum is nearby, and just to the north the name endures in Kalorama Circle, Kalorama Road and Kalorama Avenue. By 1845 Col. Bomford had passed away, and Clara sold Kalorama, spending the rest of her years with her daughter in Maine. It is probable that the coins passed to General Towson around this time, possibly as a bequest.

So ends the tale of Joel Barlow's collection, but the saga of Daniel E. Groux and his ever-failing grand plans was just beginning. In the nearly quarter century left to him after 1851, he never again produced a numismatic work of such substance. Mayer's critical jab at Groux was the first of many. William S. Strobridge, when selling the remnants of the Groux collection in 1874, charitably called him "the fond old dreamer." More accurate, perhaps, in light of his entire career, would have been something along the lines of the "con job schemer." ✙

Teenager Wins Contest with Essay on the History of American Numismatic Literature

Fourteen-year-old Michael Berkman, a collector from Maryland, won first prize—a $5,000 college scholarship—in the fourth annual Professional Coin Grading Service (PCGS) essay contest for high school students. His winning, 3,500-word essay was titled "The History of American Numismatic Literature."

Berkman is writing a book about United States proof gold coins, which he plans to have published next year. "Books are an integral part of my coin collecting," he said. For information about next year's contest, contact the Professional Coin Grading Service at P.O. Box 9458, Newport Beach, CA 92658. ✙

Between the Covers
— by Colonel Bill Murray, NLG

"Format rhymes with doormat."
—John Carter

Sextodesimo, vicesimo-quarto, tricesimo-secundo. They all have to do with the format of a book. Format, according to my Oxford English Dictionary, is "the shape and size of a book." My Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary tells me format is "the shape, size and general make up (as of something printed)." John Carter's *ABC for Book Collectors* says it is "used to indicate the size of a volume in terms of the number of times the original printed sheet has been folded to form its constituent leaves."

Does everybody understand? Carter also tells us these strange terms are "the technical terms of the paper trade which provide the names—such as pott and elephant ... for the sub-categories of size. Most booksellers' catalogues nowadays dispense with a terminology unfamiliar to, and unnecessarily technical for, the majority of their readers."

Change the final word of that last quote to "customers," and I think you will see why our NBS-member booksellers are kind to us by the technical words they use to describe format. I won't presume to guess their thoughts about our knowledge of books. It may best be left unstated. I know I'm not going to ask what they think of my knowledge of books.

Back to Carter. He gives us a few more words and abbreviations, some of which may be a bit more familiar. *Folio (Fo); Quarto (Qto, 4to); Octavo (Oct, 8vo); duodecimo (12mo).* Fortunately for us, most of our bookseller friends put the words, abbreviations and their meanings in a table in their catalogs. Look at these two examples:

Folio: 13 inches, 33 cm
Folio - 13"+
Quarto (4to): 12 in., 30cm
4to - 12"+
Octavo (8vo): 9 in., 23cm
8vo - 9"+
12mo: 7-8 inches, 18-20cm
12mo - 7"+
16 mo: 6-7 inches, 15-18cm
16mo - 6"+
24 mo: 5-6 inches, 13-15cm
24mo - 5"+

32 mo: 4-5 inches, 10-13cm
32mo - 4"+

Look at the quote that started this little dissertation, and you can determine where each of them fit into the above tables.

One more thing from Carter, this about pronunciation: "sexto-decimo = sixteenmo; vicesimo-quarto = twentyfourmo; and tricesimo-secundo = thirtytwomo."

NBS booksellers, thank you. ✾

The Numismatic Bibliomania Society Membership Application

YES, I hereby apply for membership in the Numismatic Bibliomania Society. I understand that I will receive the Society's quarterly journal, *The Asylum*.

Name: _____

Street: _____

City :_____ **State:** ____ **Zip:** _____

Phone: _____

Other numismatic organizations I have been affiliated with: _____

My collecting interests are: _____

_____

Membership dues are $15.00 in North America, $20.00 elsewhere Members receive all copies of the current volume of *The Asylum*.

Return application with payment to:
NUMISMATIC BIBLIOMANIA SOCIETY
DAVID HIRT, SECRETARY
5911 QUINN ORCHARD ROAD
FREDERICK, MD 21701

I hereby make application for membership in the Numismatic Bibliomania Society, subject to the bylaws of the organization.

_____ _____
Signature of Applicant **Date**

E-Sylum Complements *Asylum* for Numismatic Literature Collectors

by William T. Gibbs

It might seem unusual that an organization of collectors who love the feel and smell of old books would sponsor a weekly online journal, but it is not at all out of the ordinary for the Numismatic Bibliomania Society. NBS does embrace the traditional publishing field. It publishes *The Asylum*, a traditional magazine featuring articles on numismatic books, auction catalogs and other forms of numismatic literature.

However, it also embraces the World Wide Web and the Internet by publishing a weekly online journal, *The E-Sylum*. Online subscribers subscribe to *The E-Sylum*, which arrives weekly (every Sunday) in their E-mail. Each online issue features research tips, requests for research help, comments from subscribers and other useful information.

The June 13 issue is typical.It features a report from subscriber David Cassel and the status of his research into U.S. postage currency patterns for a book that he is writing. In particular, Cassel notes that an article about his research in the June 14 issue of *Coin World* resulted in the unexpected contact with the owner of a coin he had wanted to examine. Cassel also received useful research advice via *The E-Sylum*.

Cassel wrote in the online journal: "The owner of the J-325a [postage currency pattern] contacted me through the *Coin World* article just as you did. As happy as I am to have found this unique coin, I am equally happy to have found you and your organization. I am grateful for your offer of assistance.

"Maybe you would care to ask your members to advise me of their holdings of postage currency coins of 1863 and the related dated coins of 1868 and 1869. There are still other coins that have been cataloged that may have been incorrectly attributed. Also, I am trying to provenance as many as I can." Cassel made an additional request for information from owners of 20th century auction catalogs offering lots of postage currency postage.

A request for help made in the previous issue may have paid off for the researcher. Russ Logan notes that he can help Pete Smith, who asked for help in the June 6 issue on Civil War

patriotic envelopes.

Earlier this year, a request for research assistance from a *Coin World* staff member led him to a monograph on John Leonard Riddell. Riddell was a truly remarkable man—a medical doctor, biologist, inventor, New Orleans postmaster, official at the New Orleans Mint and one of the original owners of one of four 1861 Confederate half dollars. The help provided from the request made to *The E-Sylum* has proven invaluable in researching the feature, which will be published later this year in *Coin World.*

The immediacy of the Internet and World Wide Web appears to be one the strongest benefits of this online journal. Members can communicate with each other instantaneously via e-mail. The NBS is a nonprofit organization promoting numismatic literature. For more information, see the society's Web site at http://www.coinbooks.org/. You can join the NBS and obtain a subscription to the printed journal, *The Asylum*, as well as subscribe to the online edition. Contact Dave Hirt, NBS Secretary-Treasurer, 5911 Quinn Orchard Road, Frederick, MD 21701. ✾

—Copyrighted article published with permission from the July 5, 1999, issue of Coin World

Get on Board with The E-Sylum

the weekly e-mail newsletter of the Numismatic Bibliomania Society

Hundreds of bibliophiles around the U.S. and the world subscribe to this free publication, containing news and information about NBS and numismatic literature in general.

To subscribe, write to Wayne Homren at whomren@coinlibrary.com
For more information, see the NBS web site at http://www.coinbooks.org/

The Dispersal of the
KENNETH LOWE Library
at the M.S.N.S. Coin Show, Dearborn, MI.
Public Auction Saturday, Nov. 27, 1999

- EVERYBODY'S GONNA BE THERE -

THE MONEY TREE

Dealers in Numismatic Literature

1260 Smith Court
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PH. (440) 333-3444
FAX (440) 333-4463

If you're not on our mailing list and would like to be, please let us know.

NUMISMATIC LITERATURE SALE #32
Public Auction, Saturday, November 27, 1999
Mail Bid Sale Closes December 4, 1999

We are always interested in purchasing or accepting consignments of whole libraries or individual items including books, catalogs, ephemera, ANA memorabilia, tokens, medals, badges.

MYRON XENOS, NLG
(38 Yr. Member of ANA)

DAVID SKLOW, NLG
(23 Yr. Member of ANA)

The Numismatist: The First Six Volumes. Where Are They Now?

by David J. Sklow

In 1888 a country doctor in Monroe, Michigan, started a small numismatic journal that was to become the cornerstone of the American Numismatic Association. Dr. George Francis Heath printed the first six years of the new journal on a small, hand press at his home. Dr. Heath would become the founder of the ANA in 1891 and the journal he started, its official organ, entitled "The Numismatist."

It is now over 100 years since the first six volumes of *The Numismatist* were printed, so I ask you, where are they today? Many theories circulate among bibliophiles as to the actual number printed of each volume.

The first three volumes of *The Numismatist* were produced and distributed before the American Numismatic Association drew its first breath. The good Dr. Heath was a part-time coin dealer and sent *The Numismatist* to anyone who bought coins from him; it also was offered by subscription. It is not well known that Dr. Heath printed a listing in *The Numismatist* titled, "Our Numismatic Directory." This directory had no relationship to ANA membership, but everyone on the list received a copy of *The Numismatist.*

The following statement appeared on page 27 of the February 1891 issue: "Remember that the Numismatist goes regularly or irregularly to every name in this directory; and that a yearly advertisement will reach over 700 coin collectors." By 1893 the Directory had more than 900 names, and the 177th member joined the ANA. Another editorial by Dr. Heath in May 1891 said, "A liberal number of free copies are each month distributed among coin collectors that are not subscribers."

It is the statements of Dr. Heath himself that lead to the conclusion that possibly more than 1,000 copies of each issue of 1892 and 1893 were produced. The quantities for Volume 3 in 1891 are surely smaller than those of 1892 and 1893, but

still a sizeable issue. The following appeared on page 2 of the January 15, 1891, issue: "Our numbers February, May, August and November, will contain advertisements. Extra editions will be published and every known coin collector reached." In February 1891, a limited edition, quarterly version of *The Numismatist* was introduced. It was 24 pages and cover, postpaid for 12 cents.

The first two volumes—1888-89 and 1890—were produced in much smaller print runs. These volumes still were available from Dr. Heath as late as July 1893, as stated in that issue of *The Numismatist* (page 7): "Positively the last chance. The editor offers the following remaining three first volumes of the Numismatist: Volume 1 (seven copies on hand) per volume post free 25 cents. Volume 2 (nine copies on hand) per volume post free 25 cents. Volume 3 (eleven copies on hand) per volume post free 75 cents."

This was not the first ad to offer back issues of the early volumes. In August 1890, Volume 1 was offered for 25 cents; in the November 1891 issue, Volumes 1 and 2 could still be supplied for 25 cents each, according to Heath.

In addition to the ANA membership, the numismatic directory list, subscribers and coin collectors receiving *The Numismatist*, ANA officers received an extra copy of each issue.

Where are all the sets of early *Numismatists* today? Complete sets of the first six volumes seldom appear at auction, but when they do, you'd better have your checkbook in hand! Two of the most famous sets in existence have changed hands in the last 10 years. First was the set once belonging to William J. Jerrems (ANA #3 and its first president), sold in the John W. Adams Sale by George F. Kolbe in June 1990. This set included Volumes 1-65 and realized an astounding bid of $30,000!. The second set originally was owned by Andrew C. Zabriskie (interestingly, Zabriskie was not a member of the ANA) and sold in the Armand Champa Library Sale by Bowers and Merena in November 1994, where it realized $13,200!

It is the opinion of this researcher that as many as 25 sets of the first six volumes can be traced in public offerings. They are listed in the accompanying table.

Whereabouts of The Numismatist: Sets of The First Six Volumes

	Current Owner	History
1.	American Numismatic Association	Ex: George Heath, Ex: Farran Zerbe, Ex: W.W.C. Wilson
2.	American Numismatic Society	By: Subscription
3.	Carnegie Museum Library	Ex: George Clapp
4.	Harry Bass Jr. (deceased 1998) (*consigned to George F. Kolbe for sale)*	Ex: W.J. Jerrems Jr. (ANA #3); Ex: A. Murl Kimmel (ANA #4284); Ex: Perlmutter; Ex: Ray Byme Jess Peters Sale #79 9/26/75 ($850); Ex: John W. Adams Kolbe Sale #44 (Lot 202, $30,000)
5.	unknown	Ex: Ed Frossard Sale #130 ($7.25)
6.	unknown	Ex: Hal A. Day, per ad in Feb. 1907 issue of *The Numismatist*
7.	Rick Bagg	Ex: Andrew C. Zabriskie, Ex: Farran Zerbe Henry Chapman Zabriskie Sale 6/4/1909 (Lot 711, $300); Ex: Louis Werner; Ex: Joseph Lepczyk private sale to Armand Champa; Ex: Bowers & Merena Sale 11/17/94 (Lot 280, $13,200)
8.	unknown	Ex: Joseph Hooper (ANA #11); Ex: Ludger Gravel (ANA LM #3), per article in Jan. 1912 issue of *The Numismatist,* p. 14
9.	unknown	Ex: G.L. Tilden (ANA #959), per ad in Mar. 1912 issue of *The Numismatist,* p. 107
10.	unknown	Ex: Lyman Low Sale 4/18/17
11.	unknown (lost in mail)	Ex: B. Max Mehl; donated to ANA in 1924 & lost in mail enroute to ANA Historian Jack Ogilvie in 1950s
12.	Dan Hamelberg	Ex: Pierre Tremblay, Ex: Julius Guttag (ANA#856), per Feb. 1925 issue of *The Numismatist*; Ex: Abe Kosoff's Guttag Sale 8/6/40 (Lot 109, $130); Ex: So. Kaplan, Ex: Will Neil, Ex: Mehl Sale #110 6/17/47
13.	unknown	Ex: Art Institute of Chicago per Mar. 1925 issue of *The Numismatist,* p. 149; offered for sale in Apr. 1948 issue of *The Numismatist* for $100 by Art Institute (sale confirmed)
14.	unknown	Ex: William C. Stone (ANA #34) per Mar. 1925 issue of *The Numismatist,* p. 149

Whereabouts of The Numismatist: Sets of The First Six Volumes

	Current Owner	History
15.	unknown	Ex: Elliott Smith (ANA LM#1) per Feb. 1925 issue of *The Numismatist*, p. 90
16.	unknown	Ex: Robert Earl (ANA #675) per Feb. 1925 issue of *The Numismatist*, p. 90
17.	unknown	Ex: Raymond L. Caldwell (ANA #1905) per ad in Apr. 1928 issue of *The Numismatist*, p. 267; Ex: Mehl Sale 12/8/1931 (Lot 912); Ex: Stack's Sale #64 2/27/43
18.	unknown	Ex: R.L.Reid (ANA#155); Ex: Chas H. Fisher Sale 5/3/41 (Lot 181) prl $135
19.	unknown	Ex: William A. Philpott Jr.; Ex: B. Max Mehl Sale #107 11/23/45; Ex: John Rowe; Ex: Harry Bass Jr.
20.	unknown	Ex: Paul M. Fouts (ANA #4792); Ex: Harry Bass Jr.; Ex: G.F. Kolbe Sale #75 (Lot #4) 12/12/98 prl $10,500
21.	Remy Bourne	unknown
22.	John J. Ford Jr.	Ex: Hiram Deats (ANA #15)
23.	Eric Newman	unknown
24.	John J. Pittman (deceased 1997)	Ex: John F. Jones (ANA #6)
25.	unknown	Set sold in Europe more than 20 years ago

There is one great, overwhelming fact concerning *The Numismatist*. The first six volumes (in originals) are the most sought-after and coveted pieces of American numismatic literature. A library lacking these volumes just seems to fall short of greatness!

Now, as we approach the year 2000, several complete sets are poised to come up for public auction. The famous library of Harry Bass Jr. may contain as many as three complete sets of these early volumes! The library of past ANA President John J. Pittman contains the original set of John F. Jones (ANA #6). Both these libraries will come on the market in 1999 and 2000. What an opportunity for the collector!

The Numismatist: The First Six Volumes, Where Are They Now? (cont.)

These volumes not only tell a tale of history, but also are the birthplace of the American Numismatic Association and archive its very creation. The coin collector has the 1913 Liberty Head nickel and the 1804 silver dollar—the numismatic bibliophile has the first six volumes of *The Numismatist.* ✾

Sources

The Numismatist, Sept. 1888-Dec. 1893; Feb. 1907; Jan. 1912 (p. 14); Mar. 1912 (p. 107); Feb. 1925 (p. 90); Mar. 1925 (p. 149); Apr. 1928 (p. 267); Apr. 1948.
Bowers & Merena Sales, Nov. 16, 1988; Nov. 17, 1994.
Henry Chapman Sale, June 4, 1909.
Charles H. Fisher Sale, May 3, 1941.
Ed Frossard Sale #130, Dec. 20, 1894.
George F. Kolbe Sales, #44, June 1, 1990; #75, Dec. 12, 1998.
Abe Kosoff Sale, Aug. 6, 1940.
Lyman Low Sale, Apr. 18, 1917.
B. Max Mehl Sales, Dec. 8, 1931; #107, Nov. 23, 1945; #110, June 17, 1947.
Numismatic Gallery Sale, Aug. 20, 1946.
Jess Peters Sale #79, Sept. 26, 1975.
Stack's Sale #64, Feb. 27, 1943.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, and retired from the United States Air Force, David Sklow is a collector and dealer in badges and medals. He conducted mail-bid sales of numismatic literature from 1982-85 and 1991-94. and currently is a partner with Myron Xenos in the numismatic literature firm, The Money Tree in Rocky River, Ohio.

Ad Hominem Ad Nauseam: The "Great Debate" between Michael Hodder & Theodore Buttrey

by Joel J. Orosz

It was billed as the debate of the year: two honored scholars, Michael Hodder and Theodore Buttrey, meeting in an open forum to discuss the merits of Western Assay Bars (WABs). The event, unfortunately, rapidly descended to the level of personal attacks upon the reputations of some of the most respected names in American numismatics. What should have been an enlightening discussion about an under-researched area of American history instead degenerated into a spectacle that savored more of big-time wrestling than of big-time numismatics.

Who would have predicted it? Dr. Buttrey, after all, brought impeccable credentials to the debate: academic appointments at the University of Michigan and at Yale, service as the curator of the Department of Coins and Medals at the Fitzwilliam Museum, and the distinction of being the only person ever to serve a Councilor of both the Royal and the American Numismatic Societies. It came as a shock to the audience, then, when Buttrey behaved less like a Cambridge don and more like a soccer hooligan.

The proximate cause of this dismaying spectacle was Buttrey's March 16, 1996, Huntington Medal Lecture, delivered at the American Numismatic Society, later published in the *American Journal of Numismatics,* Second Series, No. 9., under the title "False Western Gold Bars." In this article, Buttrey condemned as counterfeit the vast majority of existing WABs, namely those discovered after 1950. His reasoning relied on three notions.

1. There are certain similarities between the WABs discovered after 1950 and certain Mexican gold bars he believed to be false.
2. He was aware of only a very few appearances of WABs in pre-1950 numismatic auction catalogs (for example, B. Max Mehl auctioned none prior to 1950).
3. Most of the bars discovered after 1950 came from a single

THE "GREAT DEBATE" (CONTINUED)

source (John J. Ford, then with the New Netherlands Coin Company), who had not documented information regarding their provenance.

Taking these three notions as evidence, Buttrey concluded that virtually every WAB discovered since 1950 was a fraud and that only a mere handful of bars discovered pre-1950 are the genuine article.

Buttrey had thrown down the gauntlet, and Michael Hodder, one of the most wide-ranging and well-versed students of coinage in America, took up the challenge. With research assistance from P. Scott Rubin, Hodder wrote and delivered the second annual Groves Forum Lecture at the American Numismatic Society in the spring of 1999. Reviewing Hodder's presentation in *Coin World* (May 3, 1999), Rubin and David T. Alexander noted that he had systematically refuted all of Buttrey's concerns about the authenticity of WABs discovered after 1950.

1. Buttrey's condemnation of the Mexican bars was mainly impressionistic: based upon their rough appearance, lack of a pre-1950 provenance, and being handled by John J. Ford. These impressions had not been verified by primary research or extensive examination of the bars themselves.
2. Many WABs appeared in auction catalogs dated prior to 1950, especially those issued by the Chapman brothers and by Tom Elder. Buttrey, whose main area of expertise is ancient coins, simply was not familiar with the bulk of the vast corpus of American numismatic literature: catalogs, fixed price lists, and periodicals. It was clear Buttrey simply had not searched this mass of material, and hence he missed the fact that WABs were being traded in numismatic circles from the mid-19th century on.

Much of this action took place by private sale. While he did not auction any prior to 1950, B. Max Mehl did sell a number privately, including one to John Work Garrett. Mehl also collected WABs and had a multicase exhibit of them at the American Numismatic Association annual convention in 1949, as documented in *The Numismatist*. No wonder none appeared in his auctions! WABs were made in order to transport bullion. Since their destiny was to be melted for coinage (which Hodder confirmed by studying records of the San Francisco Mint), and not for sale to collectors, there was no reason for the assayer to take

any special care in making them. Hence, a rough appearance is no proof of a counterfeit.

3. There is nothing nefarious—or even unusual—about John J. Ford being the primary source for the post-1950 bars. For many years, he was the only dealer who demonstrated any interest in buying them, and naturally, those who had bars to sell wound up selling them to him.

The ANA offered the use of its Numismatic Theatre during its 1999 anniversary convention so Buttrey and Hodder could meet face-to-face. Buttrey's acceptance took many knowledgeable numismatists by surprise. After all, the findings revealed in the Groves Forum Lecture had conclusively demonstrated that Buttrey's core contention—that but a small handful of authentic WABs existed before 1950—was in error. Some speculated Buttrey would use the occasion to graciously back away from his untenable position.

So the stage was set for August 11, at 9 a.m., when the two scholars met in the Numismatic Theater (Room 13 at the Rosemont Convention Center). Buttrey, who spoke first, confounded those who expected a gracious retreat by vigorously renewing the attack. He reiterated the main arguments made in his 1996 article, mentioning the Mexican bars once more and surprisingly, insisted once more that WABs were virtually unknown prior to 1950, as measured by appearances in auction catalogs. But what of the bars uncovered by Hodder's and Rubin's research? Hodder, said Buttrey, had not found a single new bar.

The audience reacted to this surprising statement with an audible murmur. Buttrey quickly said that virtually all the bars uncovered by Hodder and Rubin had been "unparted" bars that did not meet his definition of gold. He had written about gold bars in his article, and he considered gold bars to be .995 or more gold; anything less was outside the scope of his argument.

This announcement came as news to those who had read "False Western Gold Bars," for nowhere in that article did Buttrey define his scope of interest so narrowly. It was easy to see why Buttrey had indulged in such ex post facto strict constructionism, however, since it considerably narrowed the scope of the territory he had to defend.

However handy this pronouncement may have been in

reducing Buttrey's exposure, it led inescapably to a major absurdity. If one is to accept Buttrey's position, then a WAB that is .995 or higher is almost certainly genuine, while one that is .994 or lower is almost certainly fake. The distinction is clearly arbitrary with no empirical basis, and rather reminds one of the pointless arguments about whether certain modern proof coins should be graded MS-68 or MS-69. Undeniably, however, by retreating to .005 of his original position, Buttrey made himself a smaller target.

Even this greatly reduced position, however, was still very vulnerable, so to prevent it from being overwhelmed, Buttrey seized the offensive, with the objective of discrediting Ford and inflicting collateral damage on Norman Stack and Q. David Bowers. The following quote attributed to Buttrey are taken from the author's notes made during the debate. The words may be slightly paraphrased, but when the ANA (which banned audiotape recordings during the debate itself) releases the videotape of the talk, it will confirm that the statements quoted are faithful to the spirit of Buttrey's remarks.

Buttrey's first personal attack was directed at Ford. "We cannot take Mr. Ford's word for anything because he will say anything." Warming to the task, Buttrey stated that "... in some corners this may pass as marketing ... in law, it is called fraud." Turning his attention to one of his critics, Buttrey stated, "Stack's says I'm trying to blacken people's reputations." then added with relish, "I don't know if I've been successful, but I've tried." Scholarly dealer Q. David Bowers was not spared, for Buttrey condemned bars sold in Bowers and Ruddy's 1982 sale of the Clifford Collection as frauds.

Then, turning his invective upon his debating partner, Buttrey charged, "Hodder has cooked the evidence, but then he studied with the master." In case anyone might harbor any doubt as to the identity of "the master," Buttrey referred to Hodder as "John Ford's intimate."

When Hodder took his turn at the podium, he resisted, to his credit, what must have been a strong urge to indulge in tit-for-tat ad hominem assaults. He began by dryly noting that he was the intimate of no one excepting his wife. Hodder then shared how he and Rubin had uncovered 29 WABs from 17 different assayers,

all sold before 1950. Hodder explained why the vast majority of these were unparted (an acute shortage of the necessary parting acids in California at the time they were made). He also asserted that most were made for transport, with the ultimate destiny of being melted for coinage, so the assayers often did not take the time to do a quality job. Thus, Buttrey's equating of poor workmanship with counterfeit status was not defensible.

Another of Buttrey's assertions was untrue, said Hodder, namely that no scientific testing had been done on WABs. At his behest, non-destructive assays had been done at Harvard on 11 WABs. No two were alike in composition, something one would not expect if the bars were, as Buttrey had implied, the work of one or two modern counterfeiters. Finally, Hodder revealed that one of the bars Buttrey had condemned, an H. Harris $5 bar, carried a stamp that matched exactly that of an H. Harris bar recently salvaged from the wreck of the S.S. *Central America*. As more bars from that wreck are made available, they will probably prove that other WABs castigated as fakes by Buttrey are in fact authentic.

Hodder closed his statement by noting that it strained credulity to the breaking point to imagine, as Buttrey does, that one or two modern counterfeiters would go the enormous trouble and expense of making dozens of different molds and creating hundreds of different punches to make a couple hundred counterfeit bars. It is all the more absurd since, at the time they were allegedly fabricated, the WABs were worth but a small premium over the bullion price of gold.

It was now Buttrey's turn to rebut, and he began by responding to Hodder's last point. "Whoever made the Piltdown Man didn't profit from it either, but undoubtedly derived great satisfaction from the hoax!" Then Buttrey offered a dramatic flourish. Hodder, he stated, "did not address manipulation and falsification of the evidence, and outright fraud." Buttrey then announced that he intended to turn over to the Attorney General of the State of New York all the evidence he had amassed on this matter, "for investigation of criminal fraud against John J. Ford, Stack's and Michael Hodder."

In reaction to this bombshell, Hodder, in his rebuttal, deadpanned, "Well that's a surprise." If Buttrey meant to cow Hodder

by this threat, he must have been surprised to find it seemed to stir his blood. Hodder used his time to cross-examine Buttrey, to devastating effect. Under Hodder's persistent questioning, Buttrey reluctantly admitted that he neither attended the Clifford sale nor examined the WABs it offered, which he had nonetheless condemned as false. When asked if he had examined the Bowie $5 bar he called a fake, Buttrey admitted he had seen only one side of it—and through a layer of Plexiglas, at that. When Hodder asked how he could judge the merits of the piece on such slim evidence, Buttrey replied that "I didn't like its source." The source, of course, was John J. Ford. Still in full prosecutorial mode, Hodder asserted that guilt by association was a flimsy means of determining the genuineness of any numismatic piece. Hodder closed by pointing out that Buttrey had the remarkable ability to decide the authenticity of a numismatic item without examining the item itself, making him the first-ever "psychic authenticator."

There followed an opportunity for audience questions. ANA Executive Director Ed Rochette gamely tried to maintain a question-and-answer format, but several of those whose oxen had been gored by Buttrey could not contain themselves. Both Norman Stack and Q. David Bowers, for instance, took the floor to denounce the tone of Buttrey's assaults and to defend their personal honor. Fred Holabird, a consultant to the mining industry, mentioned that non-destructive assays, such as those Hodder had had conducted at Harvard, were not as reliable as invasive ones. Bob Rhue thereupon offered to underwrite invasive assays to settle the question of composition once and for all.

The last questioner, John J. Ford, reminded Buttrey that he had been a dinner guest at the Ford home nearly 30 years before and had asked Ford to supply him with photographs of WABs. Ford had complied, and Buttrey had promised to return the photos within a few weeks. Not only had Buttrey never done so, he had actually used the photos in an effort to prove that Ford had perpetrated a fraud. "Mr. Buttrey," concluded Ford, "I just want my pictures back."

"The Great Debate" unfortunately generated far more heat than light. Although a few interesting points about the WABs were discussed (such as the assay question), few were settled

conclusively. The quality of the two differing positions, however, acquired the clarity of crystal. Michael Hodder combined primary research at the San Francisco Mint, a thorough review of the catalog, fixed-price list and periodical literature, and an extensive firsthand examination of the WABs themselves to document his position. Theodore Buttrey did little if any primary research, conducted a very spotty review of the literature, and examined a few photographs of WABs, along with a view or two of a bar through protective Plexiglas, as "authority" for condemning hundreds of WABs as fakes. This would be bad enough if all that was at stake was the authenticity of numismatic items. When, however, the reputation—and even the physical freedom—of respected scholars and dealers is at stake, the meagerness of the documentation is inexcusable.

It seems extremely doubtful that the New York State Attorney General will take up a case supported by shards of mostly dubious evidence. Such reckless accusations, however, will harm the reputations of the targets if for no other reason than many people are uncritical in their belief of innuendo. And there is little doubt that some of the mud Buttrey hurled will miss the intended individual targets and smear the broader world of numismatics itself.

Theodore Buttrey has raised grave charges and presented supposition to prove it. If he can make those charges stick, it is incumbent upon him to produce the proof, and soon. If he cannot, he should be enough of a gentleman to apologize to those wronged by the recklessness of his accusations. Until he does one or the other, however, he may have to live with a new nickname hung upon him by one of the attendees at the Great Debate: "Tail Gunner Ted." ✾

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by: John Cunnally. Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999. xi, (3), 230 pp, well illustrated in the text. Octavo, cloth with d.j. Price $50, postpaid (Book rate U.S.A. and overseas)

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Carl Herkowitz, of Detroit, Michigan, joyfully announces the realization of an "impossible" hometown American Dream—the glorious acquisition of both known Detroit 1894 ANA Convention "programmes"! Ex Armand Champa and George D. Hatie libraries, the two "survivors" of that legendary convention are now reunited here in Detroit, together again after an odyssey of 105 years! *Coin*cidentally, George was a Detroiter and Armand was formerly of Detroit.

Heartfelt thanks to George Kolbe and David Sklow ... and the horse-drawn '94 pioneer attendees who met at the old Detroit Museum Of Art at the corner of Jefferson Avenue and Hastings Street!

Best wishes to all,

Carl